

themselves, role models to young people who need someone to look up to, someone to set a positive example for how they should live their lives and how they should treat others.

This is a big responsibility, but the good news is you've all proven that you're up to the challenge. I want to thank you for representing the highest ideals of our Nation and for making America so proud.

May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:36 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mitt Romney, president and chief executive officer, Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the 2002 winter Olympic games; Olympic gold medalists Tristan Gale, women's skeleton, Sarah Hughes, women's figure skating, Jim Shea, men's skeleton, Vonetta Flowers, women's bobsledding, and Apolo Anton Ohno, men's short track speedskating; and Paralympic gold medalists Manuel Guerra, Jr., goalie for the ice sledge hockey team, and Sarah Will and Sarah Billmeier, women's skiing. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Proclamation 7546—National Park Week, 2002

April 23, 2002

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Our national park system helps preserve our history, heritage, and the natural beauty of our Nation for the enjoyment of all our citizens and many international visitors. Thanks to our park system, many of these treasures retain their original beauty and grandeur. The parks are places for recreation, education, and reflection, and we must take care of them in a way that preserves them for posterity.

In 1872, the Congress established in the Territories of Montana and Wyoming what we all know now as Yellowstone National Park. This beautiful area later became the first to be designated as a national park. Our national park system was established in 1916 to protect and maintain our natural resources and historic sites. Today, there are 385 na-

tional parks on 84 million acres, visited annually by 280 million people from around the world.

My Administration's "National Parks Legacy Project" was initiated to ensure proper care for our national park system. Through thoughtful and diligent efforts, the National Parks Legacy Project will enhance the parks' ecosystems, improve outdoor opportunities, address infrastructure needs, and establish accountability through performance goals. The National Parks Legacy Project and other actions such as our support for the Everglades Restoration Plan and our request to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund are important steps to support existing and future parks, vital habitats, and threatened ecosystems. I have asked the Secretary of the Interior to prepare an annual report on the conditions of our national parks and to offer specific recommendations for improvements.

We must also pay tribute to the role that the dedicated 20,000 men and women of the National Park Service play in preserving our parks. Each day these professionals and more than 120,000 volunteers work to make national parks accessible, safe, educational, and well maintained. Their job is critical to the future of our parks and national treasures, and America is grateful.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 22 through April 28, 2002, as National Park Week. I call upon all the people of the United States to join me in recognizing the importance of national parks and to learn more about these areas of beauty and their historical importance.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:22 a.m., April 24, 2002]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 25.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
National Emergency With Respect to
Significant Narcotics Traffickers
Centered in Colombia**

April 23, 2002

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report that my Administration has prepared on the national emergency with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia that was declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995.

George W. Bush

The White House,
April 23, 2002.

**Remarks at the National Teacher of
the Year Award Ceremony**

April 24, 2002

The President. Well, thank you, Rod. Thanks very much. I want to welcome you all to the White House and the spectacular Rose Garden. I'm a part of a proud tradition: For 25 years, American Presidents—for 50 years, American Presidents have been privileged to present the National Teacher of the Year Awards.

This ceremony not only honors a single individual; this ceremony honors an entire profession. Teachers make extraordinary contributions to the communities in which they live and, therefore, make extraordinary contributions to our entire country. We give our teachers a great responsibility, to shape the minds and hopes of our children. We owe them our thanks and our praise and our support.

I wish the First Lady would be here today. She is—she reminds me on a daily basis of the importance of being a teacher. When I married her, she was a public school librarian. She really didn't care for politics much—[*laughter*]—didn't particularly care for politicians. [*Laughter*] But I'm so glad she said

yes when I asked her to marry me. She's a great First Lady and loves the idea of teaching, and one of her jobs is going to go around the country and remind people of the noble profession of teaching and encourage people to become teachers.

I appreciate Secretary Rod Paige. I've known Rod a long time; we're fellow Texans. When I picked somebody to be the Secretary of Education, I didn't want some theorist; I wanted somebody that had actually been in the trenches, who understood the importance of public education and how to make it work. And I wanted somebody that had a passion to make sure that no child got left behind in America. And I found the right man in my friend Rod Paige, to be the Secretary of Education.

Secretary Paige. Thank you.

The President. I want to thank two Members of the United States Congress: Judd Gregg, with whom I worked closely on the education bill we passed—he's from the State of New Hampshire—Todd Tiahrt from the State of Kansas. Thank you both for coming.

I just had the honor of having my picture taken in the Oval Office with 57 teachers of the year, and it was joyous. It was great. I want to thank you all for coming. It seemed like some of you were just as excited as I was to welcome—[*laughter*]—but it's a great office, as you could see. It's such an honor to be in that office on a daily basis, just like I know you feel it's an honor to be in your classrooms on a daily basis. So congratulations; thanks so much for being a teacher; thanks for setting such a great example; and welcome.

I also want to thank and congratulate our four finalists: Marian Galbraith, Henry Brown, Tracy Taylor Callard, and Chauncey Veatch. I'm going to say something about Chauncey a little later on.

Before I do so, though, I want America to remember how important it is to have good teachers in our classrooms. Teachers help students to read and write and to think and to count. These skills are essential, yet teaching them is only a part of a teacher's work. A good teacher instills in their students a lifelong interest in learning. A good teacher